

NAME: Rev.<sup>4</sup> Kono, Juhel DATE OF BIRTH: 1/9/1898 PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima  
 Age: 76 Sex: M Marital Status: M (?) Education: University at Tacoma & Seminary  
in Berkeley

PRE-WAR:  
 Date of arrival in U.S.: 1911 Age: 13 M.S.Y.Y. Port of entry: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation/s: 1. Farmer/Student 2. Minister (Methodist)  
 Place of residence: 1. Tacoma, Wash. 2. San Jose, Ca. 3. Palo Alto, Ca.  
 Religious affiliation: Christian Church 4. Vacaville, Ca. 5. West IA, Ca. (3 yrs)  
 Community organizations/activities: 6. Hawaii (11 yrs)

EVACUATION:  
 Name of assembly center: None - Kono was in Hawaii during the war.  
 Name of relocation center: None Names of bank/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dispensation of property: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jobs held in camp: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jobs held outside of camp: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Left camp to go to: \_\_\_\_\_

POST-WAR:  
 Date returned to West Coast: 1947  
 Address/es: 1. Hawaii (Until 1947) 2. Riverside, California (7 yrs)  
 3. Seattle, Washington  
 Religious affiliation: Christian Church  
 Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 5/22/74 Place: Seattle, Wash.

*Translator: Toshi Kusunoki*



Name: Juhei Kono

Age: 76 years old

Date of Birth: Jan. 9, 1898

Place of Birth: Hiroshima Ken

Came to U.S.: 1911 at the age of 13

Occupation: Minister (Methodist)

Camp: no experience (He was in Hawaii)

Interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe

Interview Date: May 22, 1974

Interview Place: Seattle, Washington

Translator: Toshi Kusunoki



SOME THOUGHT AND SUGGESTION AND OTHER EXPLANATORY MATTERS  
TO THE INTERVIEW OF REV. JUHEI KONO, TRANSLATED BY TOSHI  
KUSUNOKI.

Love-marriage as opposed to arranged-marriage which was  
the most popular type of those days. If the word love-  
marriage is too awkward and unfitted, then the question  
can be restated, "So, it was not an arranged-marriage,  
then?" The response being, "Well, it wasn't. We liked  
each other and loved. That's why we got married." or  
something like that.

Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere; in any case it was a plot  
by the war-time Japanese military to take over the entire  
Asia, to which they gave a rosy name (I disagree with Rev.  
Kono's point). There must be a fixed English name in a  
history book. The third Reich under Hitler, and this  
Asiatic Co-something.

Originally wondered if Namuamidabutsu in Japanese could  
be the same in English. So called up Honganji Betsuin  
Buddhist Church, and their answer was, "The same." Why my  
question in the first place! I'm ashamed of myself at  
this point.

American-infected is used in Japanese to indicate the  
kind of attitude/mentality where some people would say  
after coming back from the US "Everything in America is  
great and beautiful. Japan is no good." To those people  
we say they are infected too much. Whether it was well-  
meant or otherwise, those who give such a stupid/senseless/  
idiotic comments are rightfully most hated in Japan, by  
the way.

That's all. Feel absolutely free to choose better words  
than i did, and have fun. Gokuro-sama.



Q: What is your name please?

A: Kono, Juhei.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Hiroshima Ken.

Q: When were you born?

A: January 9, 1898. I am seventy six years old now.

Q: What is your educational background?

A: I came over here before graduating from elementary school in Japan.

Q: The, in the U.S. you acquired all the rest of your education after that?

A: Yes, I did it here. I studied in the U.S. everything that any Japanese student would learn in school. Coming over here, I was dissapointed at the U.S., and soon I was ready to go back to Japan. In the meantime I was studying by myself the high school correspondence course (Chugaku Kogiroku) so as to take a college entrance examination in Japan. But around that time I began to change my mind. I thought, you see, "I am in the U.S. now, and this country has been filled with anti-Japanese mood. This could be one of the challenges for me to work with. Why don't I stay here and do something about it more actively?" After all, well, I had been on my own



for quite a while as far as studying was concerned.

Q: Then, you studied theology in this country?

A: Yes. I finished both my college and seminary here. I went to the ~~University~~ of Puget Sound, now located in Tacoma. As for the seminary, I went to the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, where I received my B.D. and M.A.. Since I was mainly interested in philosophy and theology, I majored in philosophy in college, and in the seminary I studied theology for the most part. I am one of those what they call, yobiyose-immigrants.

Q: How old were you when you came?

A: I came here at the age of 13.

Q: Was your father already over here?

A: Yes, he was.

Q: What was he doing?

A: Farming, near Tacoma. I helped him on the farm when I came, and did not go to school.

Q: What kind of things do you remember in Japan? You were with your mother, weren't you?

A: Yes, that's right. I was the only one in my family to be with her at that time. Having spent my life there for 13 years, I sure remember a lot of things I did when I was still young; playing on the mountains, fishing in



the rivers, things of that sort.

Q: Could you tell us about happy moments you had, or about sad things?

A: Well, talking about sad thing...the reason my father came to this country, to begin with, was that he wanted to recover from the loss in his previous business he had in Japan. You see, his business once thriving started decaying little by little. Witnessing him lose the property one by one was just too much for me, even though I was only a little kid then. Things started going away from his hands. And at the same time, it caused a lot of confusions along with it in our daily life. Things of this sort are...what should I say, unpleasant memories I had during my early days. My uncle was an artist, a painter. Being an artist, he was very poor. However he was, at the same time, a master in judo. So, I was brought up in that kind of family atmosphere from the beginning of my life. This artist uncle used to tell me, "You are gifted in arts. Why don't you try hard to develop that talent?" I was, however, not really interested in that at all.

Q: What was your family religion?

A: Buddhism. It was of Shinshu Sect. My family was a very



pious Buddhist family, and our next door neighbor was a Buddhist temple, with which we kept a special companionship as neighbors. We were very pious, and dedicated Buddhists.

Q: Did you hear of Christianity before you left Japan?

A: No, I didn't. It's all after I came over here.

Q: You and your mother...in Japan... Well, were you the only son in the family?

A: No. I had an older brother in Japan.

Q: Two of you, you and your mother, came over here, is that right?

A: No, I came by myself.

Q: You left your mother back in Japan, then?

A: Yes, that's right. When I was thirteen, I came over here by myself. My brother stayed in Japan.

Q: At the age of 13; isn't it really much too young?

A: That's right.

Q: How did it happen that you came? to study?

A: Well, the main reason was that my father who was here already was getting older and older, and thought it would be of help to him if I came and helped his work, and that



he was thinking to come back to Japan after paying back his debts as soon as possible. That's what he kind of had in his mind.

Q: A 13 year old by coming here to work?

A: Well, right, you know, to help him out. You see, it was a farmwork, and I was 13 already. I started to work right after I came. Therefore, I studied while I worked. I taught myself while I worked. I did study very hard, almost furiously, you might say. I would often go into detail and try to memorize such subjects as Chinese history Eastern history, and others.

Q: That's all after you came over here, isn't it?

A: Yes.

Q: Studying during the night?

A: Yes, and all by myself. I was hoping then to go back to Japan and take examinations. To make that possible you have to study more and harder than you ordinarily learn in school, otherwise it's a bit too difficult to pass those entrance examinations. That's why I used to study really furiously.

Q: Were you, then, willing to come here, or were you not?



A: Well, I was still a kid. My father badly wanted...It was about the time when yobiyose-immigrants were to be ended, and the mood was such that if he didn't call me in then, he never could. So, I came just one year before the regulations on yobiyose immigration were revised. Under such circumstances he decided to invite me at that time. My brother could have been of more help to him, if father was just looking for a helping hand, but my brother naturally had to look after the family. Then it was the second son's turn, so I came at last.

Q: Do you remember something that happened while you were on the ship?

A: While on board? Well, the kinds of things that I remember on the ship are those of untidy, sloppy behaviors of the people from Japan.

Q: What kind of untidiness and sloppiness, for example?

A: A vast majority of people came third class at that time. I came third class, too. When I talk of untidy things, although it is very difficult to point out certain specific matters, I'm talking mainly of the people's thinking, their viewpoints, you know. I really thought, "Are these people all right?" Besides that, nothing much is particular.



Q: Weren't there many women on the same ship, too?

A: Yes, that's right. And I heard about the affairs between some men and women while on board, though I was only a kid. I was 13, only a kid, you see. I was quite concerned about such a matter in a way kids are concerned about certain things, and felt bad if that kind of thing should be let go unquestioned. The saying goes, "Don't feel guilty doing anything in a place you are passing through," and I have to say, even in those days when people go overseas, they are apt to think that way. No sense of responsibilities of shame.

Q: Were those women on board coming as picture-brides?

A: They might have been so in those days. I think they probably were.

Q: What was your expectation of the USA before you left Japan?

A: Well, what I had in mind was a one that must be no different from anybody else's in Japan. "Since America is a rich country, the people must be living in a nicer place. Once I get there, we must be living in a nicer place than we are now in Japan." I believe I was thinking something like that. So, you see, I expected to be able to have a better life here. However, back in those days, the situation was especially terrible with Japanese everywhere, in California, over here, over there, no matter where they



lived. The houses where Japanese were living were just like, let's see, like those chicken coops, narrow and small. The picture was the same everywhere. It was like that where I came to, and just about the same with many other Japanese I visited here and there. The houses for Japanese people at that time were just like a little bit widened and remodeled stables. It was true in California, too. Recently, well, even after the war it was very much the same. After the war, take for instance, I often used to visit Brawley of the Imperial Valley, California. And the Japanese people in the area were just like that. You see, this is after the war. Once their land lease was expired, they had a horse pull their house, and moved on to another field to work. It was really like that even after the war. Those Japanese farmers' situation in Brawley after the war truly reminded me of my early days in this country, because it was similar to the living conditions of Japanese people around Seattle and Tacoma a long, long time ago, around the time when I came to America. Today the situation is different, and you can hardly find any of such people nowadays.

Q: How was the white people's attitude towards Japanese then?

A: Well, in those days we were living in the countryside, and



so we experienced less hostilities than those in the cities. But once you were out in the cities, it was all different, well, being called Japs was almost everyday thing to us. Hardly anybody--maybe with an exception of women--called us 'Japanese' as clearly as it should be said. Some people commented, "Please don't be offended when we say 'Jap'". It's only a word. It's almost an abbreviation by stopping at 'p' when we are supposed to say actually 'Japanese'. So, just take it as such, and don't be offended," but of course it is still distasteful to us anyway. So I used to tell them, "We don't hear it nice at all."

That's not all... From around that time the anti-Japanese voice was gradually on its uprising. As it went on, I heard that people even spit on Japanese on the street. In fact, I myself was spit upon more than a few times. Eventually this sort of thing caused us to think that America was not a place to stay longer, and that it would be much better to go back to Japan. This is one of the reasons why so many people at that time wanted to go back to Japan as soon as they saved enough money. Those who had never been insulted before in their life back in Japan had to take such insults, since the educated and not-so-educated all alike were insulted indiscriminately once they were in this country. Therefore, we thought



we should not stay so long in such a place, for a long time we thought that way... Well, until the outbreak of the war. As you may well know, the kind of very insulting attitude towards Japanese right before the war...Whether you were a college graduate or even a Phi Beta Kappa holder, it just didn't make any difference at all. As a result even college graduates with excellent academic records became barbers, or worked at laundry, or on farms and so on. Around right before the war started, discrimination against Japanese was much too harsh to that extent. Therefore, many Japanese people were really discouraged to, let's say, 'spread their wings and work in full'.

Some people began to think that it might be better for them to leave this country as soon as possible and go back to Japan. In fact there were lots of people like that before the war, and a considerable number of them did go back to Japan then. Those of us who are still here today are the ones who put up with those experiences, and decided to stay and fought against the anti-Japanese atmosphere of the time.

Q: How were Japanese people living during the period of 1920 through 1925.

Well, just about the same, except that the wages became better gradually. Even so, the period between 1920 till around



1925 was after all the worst time that America ever had. In 1919 this thing of picturebride was put under a ban, and then came the ban on immigration altogether. You see, the Gentleman's Agreement came to an end, and the immigration was banned... Such was the time, and the exclusion movement against Japanese became more and more extensive each day. Look at politicians of those days. They would say, "I am in favor of the exclusion of Japanese," and that became a part of their campaign platform, out of which they eventually gained more votes. There once was a Senator from California by the name of Hiram Johnson. He was one of those politicians. It was the time when you could only expect less votes if you were ever supportive towards Japanese. That is to say that the anti-Japanese movement by then had grown very powerful on political level as well. Because of such social climate, what is called "beika-movement" became very popular among Japanese, especially among Christian Churches. Christian evangelism plus 'beika'. Becoming a Christian was one way of 'beika' and at the same time, in so doing we hoped to be able to ease the anti-Japanese mood.

Q: By 'beika' do you mean naturalization?

A: No. Americanization. We gave up on the idea of naturalization because we were told that they were not going to give us citizenship status. If that was the case, we thought, they didn't have to give us one. But we figured that



for Japanese to become Americanized was very much needed. So, the churches of the time worked on Americanization and evangelism, with the two combined. As for the Buddhist churches, they couldn't do the same. Therefore, Buddhism at that time was, relatively speaking, less powerful. As you may know, it is after the war that the Buddhists became as influential as they are today. Before the war in Tacoma, for example, it was Christians that were majority. Within a Japanese community seventy percent (70%) were Christians then. Now it's reversed; only thirty per cent (30%) Christians, seventy per cent (70%) Buddhists. You will find the similar situation in Seattle, too. The power of Buddhist churches really grew big, just about everywhere. In this respect Buddhism had to yield its way to Christianity before the war, and once the war ended Christian work had to face unexpected difficulties. Now that the Buddhist people don't have to worry about anything, they can freely enjoy their religious activities.

Q: That unbalance of a lot of men and a few women...doesn't that cause problems of some sort in the community?

A: Oh, yes, sure, sure. That particular unbalance existed continuously even after we saw a big influx of picture-brides. Besides that, contrary to the expectations of the brides, some husbands were a little older than they thought their husbands-to-be might be, or some of them



were very ugly looking, and so on and so forth. These things contributed to the cause of many family problems during the time of picture-brides. Therefore, the churches and the ministers had a very difficult time over those family problems. When you compare the kind of Christian ministry of those days with that of today, you find we were busy handling such personal problems, family problems and social problems. You see, there were lots of...uh... gambling going on. Those who were playing a leadership role in our Japanese community were mostly gamblers at that time. So, I might say that the kind of social problems that the Christian churches had to face then were quite serious ones. Japanese ministers have gone through a lot hardships in a sense, you see. It's almost uncomparable when you think of the social problems that the today's churches face. And at the same time some sort of danger was always involved in old days. That's how the situation used to be. I can say the same thing about problems with men and women. Women and gambling always go together.

Q: The problem of gambling and prostitution?

A: Yes, that's what I mean, and also family problems caused by it. The prostitution problem hit the worst stage, well, before the picture-brides came over. It was really awful. Spokane, for example; the strongest and the biggest problem in the Spokane community was prostitution. So, Spokane at that time was always in terrible, terrible condition. But in the meantime, gradually the number of



Japanese women increased, and with that trend the problem became less and less visible. Well, 1920 through 1925, it wasn't as bad during those years as it used to be before that. Yet, there were still occasional problems of this nature.

Q: Could you tell us a few more examples?

A: I personally did not deal with any cases of prostitution problems, but I do know, for instance, there was a Methodist Women's Home in Seattle...it's not there any more... I've seen many of those women at around the Women's Home. They were not necessarily engaged in that type of job voluntarily, but rather they were forced into it, you see. Some of them had no choice but to do so. And those people once in a while would run away from it and come to the Women's Home for refuge. They used to seek help from churches. Things of this sort are recorded in the history of our Methodist Church. Well, after all, it was not a healthy thing. It was a thing of the time, you may say it was all caused by the social unbalance... Therefore, among us Japanese there was a strong feeling of wanting to go back to Japan as soon as making enough money to do so. They used to hang around Chinese gambling place a lot. We don't have them here any longer, but we used to see them around until a bit before the war.



Chinese people used to sell...have you heard of a "bakappei"? 'baka' meaning 'fool' in Japanese, as you know, plus 'a table' as in time-table. If you win, by bying one of those tables, you can make a good fortune out of it, if you lose, that's your tough luck. Sometimes ago I visited Brazil of South America, and there I was remined of the old days when Chinese were selling those bakappei. You see, they sold them to everybody on the street. And when I was in South America, they were still selling those things at every street corner. If you win, they give you a good amount of money, and if you lose, well, then... Everyday they would sell you a different bakappei, that's Chinese people. Japanese used to buy them everyday in those days. Some of those lucky ones would go back to Japan saying, "I won a bakappei". There were days like that. Now people are doing the same thing in KSouth America.

Q: Talking of women who ran away, were there many of them?

A: Certainly there were quite a number of them, yes. So, the family troubles were actually very serious. Ministers of churches consequently had to spare a lot of time for such things.

Q: When did you graduate from college?

A: In 1929.



Q: After that you went to the Pacific Sch-ol of Religion?

A: No, no. After college I was right away appointed to minister a church in San Jose.

Q: The, the one you graduated from in 1929 is the P.S.R. isn't it?

A: No, not the PSR, it's UPS, the University of Puget Sound. Then after that, I was assigned to the church in San Jose as a minister, and while ministering the church I went to the PSR. Therefore, when I was at the San Jose Church, I was a student pastor.

Q: Wasn't that the time when the Depression hit the nation?

A: That's right, the beginning of the Depression. Or, maybe it was laready in the Depression.

Q: How was it at that time?

A: It became worse steadily year by year from 1929 till 1935 or so, it was really terrible. For example, a Furuya Bank and the Store in Seattle--it was the biggest bank in the northwestern reagon, and the Furuya's were a million-  
aire--went bankrupt in 1931. It was a very severe blow to the Japanese community, very bad. You see, all those who put their money in the Furuya Bank, a bank by a Japanese, went bankrupt. Like I said it was in 1931, and at that time I was in California, where for (4) or five (5) banks



closed down one after another, for instance, in Sacramento.

Q: All Japanese banks?

A: No, those of white people. In Sacramento, in San Francisco, there were a lot of banks went bankrupt those days. From 1929 through 1932 Japanese communities throughout the state of California were just miserably damaged. It was during those days that a man by the name of Gentaro Kodashiro became known to many people. During the night he would leave some pounds of rice at the door steps of a needy Japanese family, and go back into darkness of the night. Nobody knew who gave them those things. Much later they found out it was Mr. Gentaro Kodashiro. He did this to really needy Japanese families in his area. This sort of thing happened in those days. You can imagine it was such a bad time, it's 1929. Actually from around that time things began to worsen gradually; from 1930 to 1931, from 1931 to 1932.

Q: Could you please tell us more about this man, Mr. Kodashiro?

A: He had some ninety acres of land in Winters, which is a little bit down the road from Vacaville. He was growing fruits there. Since he was a single man, he used to hire a lot of workers. But he couldn't make himself an exception to the depression around 1929, and his business gradually withered away because of it. At last he sold all his land, and used that money in different ways. However, he never



made a donation with a public announcement attached to it, you know. He did it to the poor people in a way just like I told you about, in a very quiet way. So, we don't know exactly what he did and how much of it he did. The reason I know of him is that in 1932 I was in charge of a church in the Vacaville and Palo Alto area, and met some of those people who knew about him. For one year, yes, for one full year in 1932 I was doing an evangelical work in Vacaville and its vicinity. ~~There~~<sup>There</sup> was 17 miles from the place where he lived to the church. On Saturday he left his house, visiting Japanese homes on the way--this is walking on foot, you see--and as I told you before, he would leave food for those who were specially poor. Leaving on Saturday, he used to walk on foot the distance of 17 miles, which took him two days. On Sunday he would attend church services, and when ~~it~~ was over, then he walked back home. Well, on the way back, he did the same, visiting different people this time. He was such a man. Later on, in 1933, ~~I~~<sup>I</sup> was assigned to a church in West Los Angeles, so I moved there. After that I really don't know much about what happened to him. At any rate such was the man, Mr. Gentaro Kodashiro. There is a Mr. Abiko in San Francisco. They two were good friends ever since they were young. Mr. Kodashiro was to marry a woman--she is now Mrs. Abiko--until when Mr. Abiko came into the picture. That is, he lost his sweetheart to Mr. Abiko. With this experience he decided to ~~live~~<sup>live</sup> as a single man ever after. He lost a woman he was very much



in love with, and after it was all over he kept that love in his heart to himself all his life, and remained single.

Q: A very genuine man, wasn't he?

A: Yes, yes. I believe Mr. Abiko knew about it. In any case it used to make me wonder what had become of this man. A After the war he was in Oakland, so I heard, working at a church as a janitor. There at the church in Oakland, a again he gave great influences upon young people. There are two, three people now in San Jose who wanted to become like him, having seen him work at the church as a janitor. Even now among the Nisei leaders around the San Jose area, you will find a few people like this. We talked about him when I recently visited there. To such an extent he was... what shall I say...a passionate man, a man of great passion. Knowing that he was that kind of a man, I always called him "The Saint of Northern California." Also, just about everybody in Oakland, and in that area in general, knew that no one but Gentaro Kodashiro can come as close as to be called the Sant of Northern California.

Q: Let's get back a little bit. You came over here at the age of thirteen, and studied by yourself...Didn't you go to a junior high school here?

A: Yes. I did go to high school in Tacoma. For some strange



reason, I was enthused about communism from around the time I started my high school. I made myself a student of the study of the communist party. Well, communism... It was around that time communism became very popular back in Japan. And I was, like I said, studying communism, too. Now, I couldn't stand just sitting in a classroom, and eventually dropped out of that high school. Instead, I started high school correspondence courses, again.

Q: Of Japan?

A: No, no. Here (in the USA.) I graduated from American high school through correspondence courses, therefore. Because, you see, if you go to a school, it takes you quite a bit of time. I couldn't help feeling that I was just wasting time there. So, I finally decided to finish high school education through the correspondence courses. In the meantime I got to be able to freely read English, and continued studying communism by myself. I read Karl Marx, Engeles, and others. I studied communism, Bolshevism, and things of that kind pretty good. Because of all these, I studied the high school education by myself, like I just told you. Around that time, there was a woman who was supporting me financially...she was in Tacoma. She wanted me to go to Moody Bible Institute. I didn't want to go there. But she insisted so strongly that I finally said, "All right." This woman was a teacher at a women's school



in Tacoma. And she set up a farewell party for me.

Q: For your going to school?

A: Yes. She was to give me a full three-year scholarship-- Moody is a three-year school, you see--and it was expected that when and if I went to that school I wouldn't have to worry anything about my financial situation. Again, even though she kindly held a farewell party for me, I was not really excited about it at all. Feeling very reluctant about it, and wondering which way I should go, I received a letter from president of Puget Sound University. Upon hearing about me, he sent me a letter saying, "You shouldn't go to such a school as Moody,"--you see, it's a very conservative school--"rather than going there, come to our school. We'll give you a scholarship." This invitation from the university president was quite a persuading one to me. Then I went to see him, since he strongly wanted to see me. After the meeting he said again he would give me a scholarship. I told him that as for the high school course, both English and Japanese, I only taught myself. His response was, "That's all right." He laid out one condition, however, and that was, "If you do a good work in the first year, then without any further exams, you can continue your study as a regular student. If you do a good job in the first year..." So, I said all right, and was enrolled in the university. I didn't lose even a year in between high school and college. I was a regular



student then taking Bachelor of Arts courses at the University of Puget Sound. I majored in philosophy there. As you can see, I had a very unusual...

Q: Majoring in philosophy you had to read a lot of books, didn't you?

A: Well, we had a very good time. Oh, one year the school offered a course in Immanuel Kant, and only three students signed up for the course. But when the class started, the other two dropped out, then I was the only one left, only myself. So, I discussed with the professor what we should do. I was the only one there. But this professor said, "Let's study together." He is still there today, but already retired now. He never forgot that, and I can't forget it either. The class with one professor and one student. We really had a good time, you see. But it was really tough, since I was the only one in the class. However hard it was, I entered the university to study, therefore... But after all, that really helped me. No one knows about this, so I'm just telling you now.

Q: Was that class on Kant for one year?

A: For only one semester.

Q: How was your college life?

A: Oh, always busy. While in college, I was at the same time



helping the Japanese Methodist Church, you see. There, I was, what you call, a local preacher. As a local preacher I helped the church. So, I usually attended prayer meetings and home meetings, and on Sunday I taught Sunday school, and then on weekdays I went to school. I was also a newspaper boy. Even that, I was delivering two different papers at a time. I was really busy, you see, delivering the papers, and spending Sundays like that. I really don't know, weel, how I managed all that. I was healthy, very fortunately, and had the scholarship. Therefore, so far the school tuition was concerned, I didn't have to worry about it.

Q: Were you living with your father?

A: No. During that time my father went back to Japan, and I was living all by myself, usually in some apartment, a small one. So I had to live alone and support myself. Oh, small one.  
but I had a very interesting time.

Q: There you graduated in four years, and then where did you go?

A: To San Jose.

Q: What was your church in San Jose?

A: Methodist church.



Q: Is that the one where Rev. Horikoshi works now?

A: Yes, in the same place. So that's why I never forget my San Jose days. In 1930 all my thirty-three people received baptism there. So I told them I really did a good job in that first year. That's why people in San Jose always remember me. Lots of people still remeber me there, you know. I served the San Jose Church for 3 years, and spent one year in Palo Alto and Vacaville.

Q: How many years did it take you to graduate from the PSR?

A: Three years. They urged me to finish it in four years. But I wasn't that young, and thought that that was enough and all for me. Although it was a little bit too hard, I wanted to finish it in three years.

Q: Were you working full-time in San Jose?

A: Yes. Did I work hard" Really. In the meantime I also gave lectures on Japanese culture at San Jose State College night school. In the beginning it was meant just for one semester. Yet, when that one semester was over, they asked me to continue for another semester. So, I ended up giving the lecture on japanese culture for full one year, while attending the PSR at the same time. It was after all a really busy year for me, though I learned a great deal in turn during this particular one year. I enjoyed it a lot. And then, when that one year was over, they asked me to continue more. I said, "No, no. It is really too much for



me now." I also had to write a thesis. You see, the PSR at the time required a thesis for the Bachelor of Divinity degree, not just examinations. I had to write the thesis... I needed more time...so, I rejected that lecturing job. In any case, it was very busy school days.

Q: When did you get married?

A: In 1932 I was married. Therefore, that particular year was really busy.

Q: How did you manage the situation?

A: We had been engaged for three years then. It may seem a long engagement period, but I couldn't marry her because... That's why I simply engaged for three years. After I finished two years in seminary, we married.

Q: After the Seminary?

A: No, no. I didn't finish it then, yet. It was at the end of my junior year.

Q: Where was your brides, or is your wife from?

A: She is from Sunnyvale.

Q: Then, you met her after you went to the seminary?

A: Yes, after I went to San Jose.

Q: A Nisei?

A: Yes, she is a Nisei.



Q: So, it was a love-marriage?

A: Well, yes. Something like that.

Q: What do you think now of the happiest things at that time?

A: Happy things...well... That one thing... I had to recall what Goethe told us. You know, he said, "When I recall my life, I found the happiest time in my life only for two weeks." That's what, you know, Goethe said in one of his writings somewhere. I recall that. When I think of myself as to whether I had any happy time or not, it is really hard to say when was the happiest itme.

Q: Well, then what kind of happy things happend in your life?

A: If I'm to talk about happy things in my life, well, after all... Things did work our somehow the way I planned. That to me is one of the happy things. Of course, in a way the San Jose Church was having a difficult time with its low, inactive phase of church business. That's why I was called to serve at the church in the first place, even though I hadn't had received regular seminary education then. But I had...what we call...as a layman I had all kinds of experiences while I was in college and also through helping Tacoma Church as a, more or less, lay-preacher. During that time I was standing in between the minister and the laymen, and the problem of how to coordinate the situation at the church always came to me. Complaints from laymen on one hand, and complaining ministers on the other. I



was more or less caught between them. So, I really experienced, what you call, problems of minister or the problem of church, as a... I was young then, of course, yet I really... In a way I suffered, you see, because I had to persuade ministers and at the same time I had to do the same to the laymen to come to an agreement. I really suffered such kind of problems, or I should say I encountered such problems in my four years of college life. Preaching really gave me strong confidence in ministry. The San Jose church had that problem, the problem between ministers and the laymen, so they couldn't get along so well. That's why our superintendent and ministers in Tacoma thought that Kono might be the man who would be able to solve that trouble and the condition in general at that church.

Q: Isn't the San Jose Church a big church?

A: But that particular time, oh, I had to wake up sometime during the midnight. When I woke up, I would pray about the church problems, for the church members, this and that. That was the kind of things to remember in my prayers in my four years of ministering experience there. But after that, oh, everything worked out all right after all. That was in a way my happiest moment, because I somehow made it a success. Our Bishop recognized what I had done, and the superintendent also appreciated what I had done. So like I said, my plan worked out.



Q: What was the most difficult thing for you?

A: You mean, about the church?

Q: Well, and in you life in general.

A: Finance was always a problem.

Q: Were you getting a sufficient salary from the church?

A: Oh, yes. You know one thing I said to the church when I went there. My whole sermon was about if a church gives a minister a kind of worry, that is financial worries, then the church never grows. A church that gives an economic problem to its ministers will never prosper. So, I told them, "Therefore, I would like everyone in the congregation to think about this always so that this church of ours would not give a minister any financial worries. As long as that problem is taken care of with me, I will do my best on my part." That was my first condition, which really hit the congregation, you see. Before, the church members always and many times had arguments about the financial problems. The treasurer of that church--by the name of Guyemon Kitazawa--was a very strong man, and he really understood what I said. Ever since he never gave me any financial problems. Not only that, he always paid me my salary in advance! That's the only church in my whole ministry life that paid the salary a month ahead. In addition to this, during summers they always gave me a vacation



money. And this is the only, you see, that made me, what you call, a minister-with-a-vacation.

Q: That's why that church really grew big.

A: That's right, that is quite important. Sometimes people hesitate to say that, but it is very important. I told that before the San Jose Church members a long time ago. Another church that never gave us any worries about the financial matters is this Seattle Methodist Church. This business of church finance becomes very strong sometimes. As to other personal, small matters, any minister of any church experiences commonly.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: Four, two girls and two boys. The two girls are living in Seattle. I have altogether eleven grandchildren.

Q: During the Depression you were in college, weren't you?

A: I was at the seminary. And then I went to West Los Angeles in 1933. The year 1933 was a really bad year. When I was in school I was receiving a scholarship from the PSR, plus I had the salary from the San Jose Church. Oh, I was getting paid an average salary that time. In any case I had two income resources, therefore; one from school, another from the church. When I went to West Los Angeles, oh, it was really a hard year. And the superintendent told me that he was very sorry because by going to West Los



Angeles I was going to be receiving only so much, 70 dollars to be exact. I was getting over ninety dollars while I was in school. And in that year we had our baby, you know. With the new baby in our family... When the baby was born I had to borrow over a hundred dollars for the hospital expenses. For this and that I had a debt of over a hundred dollars. At that time my salary was going to be cut down by twenty dollars if I should decide to go to West Los Angeles. And with this extra member, the new baby in our family, you see. At the time I really didn't know whether we should go down there or not. Oh, anyway, I decided to go.

Q: With all that, you decided to go?

A: Yes, I went to West Los Angeles. Then during that time--it was a really hard year--I knew that the financial situation of that church was really bad. They actually couldn't even pay our salary, sometimes they gave me only three dollars, or four dollars a week. Of course at the end, they somehow paid all, but... Oh, that particular year, we really suffered. After one year passed, somehow we were able to begin to go a little bit easy. I had to teach a Japanese school in San Fernando, which is about thirty miles from West Los Angeles. So, I was getting salaries from the school and from the church. After all, my church salary increased pretty close up to a hundred dollars in the following year. But, a hundred dollars was an average salary during that time. So, that is to say I was beginning to receive an



average income from the following year. This suffering was not only to myself, but all the ministers were in the same situation. So, you can not consider just me, any minister was in the same way, not just myself but all of us. That recollection is more or less an interesting one now, but never during that time.

Q: "Once it passes through the throat, nothing is too hot...?"

A: That's right. I tell you this one thing, which I'm telling to any young minister. We always tried to go along with whatever income we might receive. So, I had to borrow a hundred and fifty dollars when I got the fourth baby born, because I didn't have any money with me. That was the only debt we had got. Out of that seventy dollars, and sometimes only three dollars, or four dollars a week, I don't know how I paid back. But anyway I did pay back a hundred and fifty dollars in that hardest year, you see. That is more or less a proud thing that I have ever done. And ever since we always go along with what we receive. I once told a minister that the Salvation Army, the goodwill stores were my best friends. I told him that until I came to Seattle in 1954, up till 1954, I never bought new shirts, because I had to raise four children, you see. And during that time we couldn't expect any children's allowances. Today, we have the children's allowances, but not during that time. We thought we must give the best



education to our four children. My two boys were tennis champions, you see. One of my boys has gone to the National Tennis in the East. Somehow I made them tennis champions. My two daughters, both of them, took piano lessons. Giving piano lessons to two girls and bringing up the boys in tennis...oh, we needed money. But, you see, the only item I could cut down on was my personal expenses. So I told the minister that until 1954 I never bought new shirts. I always went to the Salvation Army and the goodwill stores. That was the only way I could think of, you see. I told him sometimes ago, "Don't worry about your salary." But at the same time I also fought for the laymen to raise ministers' salary. I didn't want to say it very much, but the fact was I was a leader among the ministers, who were concerned to raise the salary. Up till a certain point if ministers don't say anything, well, then the laymen can't do much themselves. In the beginning, when I was in Riverside, California, during that time... During that time an average minister's salary was a hundred and twenty five dollars. But we felt that somehow we must raise this salary level year after year. Every year at a conference I urged laymen to increase the salary, every year. Then, we finally brought our salary up to two hundred dollars. Well, then I told them, "From now on I will shut my mouth!" I told that to the laymen strongly,



because I was ashamed of saying that...because I myself was suffering as I said, you see. I never bought new shoes until... I told them how ministers were suffering. When I told the laymen about that, then they understood it. And they began to think, "Oh, we must do so, we must do so." That's one of my contributions there.

Q: Then, from there, from San Jose to West Covina?

A: No, no, the baby was born in Berkeley, our first one was, while I was still a student. Then in West Los Angeles another one was born, the second baby. Harris Memorial Church was the highest paid church. It made a special request for me, which our Bishop at the time disregarded. The Bishop appointed me to some other place. Then Harris Memorial Church started complaining about it, and pressed the Bishop, who unofficially promised eventually that he was going to send Kono to Honolulu in Hawaii, but he still didn't keep his word. So, more complaints came in. Finally he changed his previous appointment, and asked me to go to Honolulu at last.

Q: How long did you stay in West Los Angeles?

A: Fou three years.

Q: Then to Hawaii right away?

A: Yes. We stayed in Hawaii for eleven years altogether.



Q: How was it in Hawaii?

A: Oh, very good. The ministry in Hawaii was somewhat different than in the mainland over here, because so many Japanese are living over there. Social problems, personal problems, this and that. Then racial problems, this and that, which were much different than they are here. I enjoyed being a minister in Hawaii. Coming back in 1947, I ministered at Riverside Union Church, in Riverside, California.

Q: Oh, so you didn't have to go to a relocation camp?

A: No, no. I was in Hawaii during the war.

Q: What were you doing when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I was in a different island during that time, a place called Lahaina. I was sent to Lahaina, again to solve the church problems there. After the problems were solved, I was ready to come back to Honolulu. Then, the war began, and I couldn't move. I was pinned down to Lahaina, and had to stay there. I had no chance to come back to Honolulu. So, during that time when Pearl Harbor was attacked, I was in a different island called Lahaina, Maui. We had, therefore, many unusual war-time experiences.

Q: Of what kind?

A: Well, more or less, the war problems in general. The problem with the FBI, problem with... Well, we didn't have very many problems among Japanese, because they were



very loyal. That loyalty of Hawaiian Japanese really changed in many respects.

Q: To pro-America?

A: Yes. Since you are recording, maybe here I should tell this to you, because it is quite important. I visited nearly every Japanese church in the entire America, you see. Wherever I went during that time, I usually said something about this, that is, about what happened to the Japanese Nisei and other Japanese Americans immediately after Pearl Harbor was attacked. I don't know whether you know this or not, but I'm telling you this story, that immediately after Pearl Harbor was attacked, of course, all the Nisei people stood up and tried to defend Hawaii from Japanese invasion, especially along the shoreline, all along the shoreline. They also took up guns and stood watch-guard all night among other things. They put barbed wires all along the coast line. After all this was done, people began to say that they didn't need any service from Nisei. At that time the military martial law came from the commandor, and they took all the arms away from them. The timing of it was really disappointing. The Nisei wanted to do their best for America, and yet America did not allow them to do so. They keenly felt the duty as American citizens, but America did not recognize it. It was a disappointing experience for Japanese American



citizens in Hawaii. They really suffered. Then, wherever we went, "don't speak Japanese" propaganda was going on. Issei people speak only Japanese, and yet they were not allowed to speak Japanese in public. That kind of suffering is, in a sense, all right for the Issei. But the kind of suffering that the American born Japanese had to go through was special; they were not recognized as American citizens. Then they started to think what was the best for them to do, you know, Nisei students.

Q: The University of Hawaii students?

A: Yes. And then after the discussion, they decided that the only and the best way was for them to die for America. So, they made a resolution, "How about if we stood up and died for America? Give our lives to America." With that spirit we appealed to the commandor in Honolulu. Emmons was the commandor at that time. They wrote a petition saying that; "We are American citizens but yet the American government refuses our service. Since we are American citizens, we have a duty to do for America," so they decided, "we want you to use us as laborers, not as soldiers, but as laborers, as a labor battalion. Use us whernever you want and we do our service to America as laborers. We don't ask for any salary for that as long as you provide us a place to live and food to eat. With a place to live and some food we'll be satisfied. If it is a dangerous task, we are prepared to give our lives."



With that decision they wrote a code of petition to the commandor. When Commandor Emmons read this letter, he said, "I really cried. We didn't know the spirit of this people." Emmons gave this letter to Honolulu newspapers, and the newspapers in turn wrote about the appeal of this people. Now, that marked the beginning of the change in the attitude of the Hawaiian people toward the Japanese in Hawaii. After this, they began to think, oh... Before, they used to think Japanese were dangerous. They called us a Jap, and then, "A Jap is a Jap." When in fact they are American citizens, still they thought a Jap is a Jap. However, when this appeal from Emmons appeared on the newspapers, people began to think something different. Then, this idea of labor battalion was adopted, and they began working for the army, or wherever they were wanted.

They call it "Varsity, Victory, volunteers Corps." The number of this Varsity Victory Volunteers in the beginning was seventy or eighty, and later it went up to a hundred and fifty or something like that. Then, they rejected to accept any more than that, that is, this group had to reject any more, because there were just too many volunteer applicants to accept. So, this Varsity Victory Volunteers Corps really came out visible in Hawaii. They said in their letter, "The only way to save Japanese in Hawaii in the future...unless we die, unless we sacrifice, this cannot be done. To save Japanese we must do it. We must do it because we want to show that the Japanese here in Hawaii



are the loyal citizens of America. For this we die, for this we sacrifice." That is the Varsity Victory Volunteers Corps spirit. When this was adopted, and when they began to work, the commandor and everybody else was keeping the eyes on them to see how they were doing. And, they did a fine work, you see. The newspapers began to write about the beautiful things that they did or they were doing. Almost every week the news from the VVV appeared in the newspapers. Now, this changed the minds of the Hawaiian people, and they gradually began to think that "Well, Japanese are after all... Even though they are enemy nationality race, but yet we can trust them." That sort of trustworthy spirit was created through the VVV. Later, because of this, because of this VVV, the 442 Volunteer was granted. The VVV is a proof for the loyalty of the Japanese American. If people, the young people who live in America, if they have the same spirit like the VVV, they can be trustworthy. Finally Emmons acknowledged that the Japanese American citizens were very trustworthy. And then, the 442 volunteer Corps was specially permitted, you see, therefore, behind the story of the 442, we better not forget the VVV's great spirit of sacrifice. The 100 battalion was also impressed by this VVV spirit. But today many people forget about it. **They remember** it. They remember the 442, but very few people remember about the VVV. That's why I want people to remember that. I ~~was~~ really impressed also.



Q: How did you you feel when you heard that Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: Well, that was really a tragedy, and we never expected that to be true. We felt the danger of Japanese invasion, but we never thought it would actually happen, because it was foolish for Japanese to come over to Hawaii. If they came to Hawaii, they must occupy the Hawaii Islands instead of just attacking. Now, that's the way the American military people also thought. Therefore, one of the great mistakes for the Japanese army, or the navy during that time, was that they did not occupy the Islands. Instead they just bombed, you see. Hawaii was the base for submarines. Fortunately at the time of the bombing almost all the submarines were not in the islands, they were all out. After that they all came back. The submarine activity was ~~rebuilding~~ <sup>reinforcing</sup> the Japanese maneuver in the south, you see. If Japan occupied the Hawaiian Islands, then the submarines on the sea had to come back to San Francisco. If San Francisco became a base of submarine activities, then America really would have had a hard time. But...so...that's why Hawaii was really afraid of a possible invasion by Japan all the time. That's why. During that time there was no barbed wire set up along the coast line. The fact was that there wasn't a real defense line in Hawaii. So, it was pretty easy to occupy if the wave after wave of invasion troops came to Hawaii, but it didn't happen. Well, that was a mistake for Japan, and it was very lucky for America.



Q: Did you think from the beginning that Japan was going to lose?

A: Well, I thought so, yes. Because, you see, Japan did not really know the power of America. Now, I myself experienced this because I witnessed WWI. I was in Tacoma during that time. America then used to build transportation vessels, oh, my, so quickly. Within one month they would build one ship, and ready to go out. The work that America did...of course, America was able to do that, because of money power and man power as well, so they really built so many ships. I was watching that, you see, living in Tacoma. They could do the largest vessel within two months. Concentrate everything on one ship, and then bring them out to the sea. They became all transportation vessels sent to Europe. However, Japanese people did not know such strength. I saw this for myself, but Japanese people really did not know the strength of America. Another thing is that the American people are quite adventurous, so when the war came, they also had the spirit of sacrifice and risking their lives for America. That kind of spirit Japanese people did not know, they didn't really see the American spirit. I thought, "My, they are all being misled about the American strength." I thought Japan had no way of winning over America. Japan won over China, but not over America. If America continued to fight against Japan we felt they had to come down sooner or later. We thought that was the beginning of the tragedy.



Q: What did you think about...the Nisei should go to the war during the war?

A: Well, at the time, yes, but of course, in the beginning until the 442 Volunteers Corps was allowed. I felt really bad when that thing happened, because... You know, in Japanese we say, giri. We Japanese have that spirit. We owe kind of giri to America because we owe something to America. So, I told them many times that if we wanted to show the true spirit of Japanese, we should be loyal to America, for we owe something to America, regardless Japan would win or not. Well, one time when I was in Hawaii, the FBI asked me--I was left alone, you see, in order to look after the people who were left behind, so they didn't arrest me--I told the FBI, "Since I am a Japanese," I said, "it is natural for me to think, or for me to desire that Japan wins the war. That's a natural psychology, and I won't deny that. But the question of loyalty is quite another thing for Nisei. We owe something to America and the good Japanese know that. They are loyal to America, even though we are enemy of America in the war. That loyalty usually comes from the spirit of giri of Japanese people."

And I went on, "If you don't understand this, then many of us Japanese will have to suffer. If you understand this, then sooner or later you will begin to find the loyalty of Japanese, and you won't doubt it." That's the statement I gave to the FBI. I argued with FBI many times--it wasn't



unusual thing--and I told them that kind of things. But at the same time we were living in America, so we owe something to America.

Q: It was a very difficult time for...

A: Oh, yes, a very difficult time for Japanese. That was true even in Hawaii, too. We had, you know, sho-ri-to-. Sho-ri-to- means a groups of people who thought Japan won the war, when in fact she lost it. They did not admit that Japan lost the war. You find quite a lot of people in mainland America. They couldn't understand, you see, Japan would ever lose a war. I told them time after time, but, no, they couldn't believe it. One time I was invited to the Island of Hawaii, I was invited especially in order to explain to the sho-ri-to- people that Japan did lose the war.

Q: Is that right? Even after the war?

A: After the war, that's right. So, I went there, and explained to them how Japan lost it. "All right I understand, I understand," they said those people, but in their heart they actually did not want to believe me. So, I told them "Your psychology is that you don't want to admit the fact that Japan lost the war," so I had to tell them, "even though Japan lost the war, as long as she comes back again, it's all right. Therefore, you must have a hope in the future." And I told them one illustration of what I was thinking then.



When the General MacArthur's army landed in Japan, my desire was such that the people in Japan would open Japan widely without any resistance. I was thinking that the future of Japan rests upon how Japanese people act to this landing forces of America. My prayer and my desire was that they would accept the American army open-heartedly, and cooperate with it. I really prayed for that. I was hoping that, because if they did so, then Japan could come up again. I was watching them, you see, how they would do. And when I heard the broadcast on the radio that the American army had no problem at all, and not only that, some Japanese welcomed American soldiers very courteously, when I heard that news, oh, my... I was overjoyed, more or less, you see. "The Japan's future would be established, you see, somehow. If they had struggled against them, then they would have only suffered... But by giving them an open-hearted welcome, they themselves...instead of suffering they might be able to develop themselves much quicker than otherwise." I was hoping that way, and it happened that way.

I told them at the sho-ri-to- gathering about this prayer of mine, and said to them, "You must change your mind, and hope that Japan will survive and develop again, if you really love Japan. But if you don't love Japan, you can continue the way you feel. And then you can become unloyal Japanese, instead of loyal Japanese. If you really want



to be loyal Japanese, you better give up." Well, after that I got a compliment. They were so glad of what I told them. And when I came back over here, I found some people here and there who were in the same category as the sho-ri-to- people. Even in the mainland there were sho-ri-to- people.

Q: In Hawaii, when Pearl Harbor was hit, you were trapped in an island. How long did you have to stay in the island?

A: Well, during the war-time, I was an alien. No alien was possible to move out of where he was. So, during the war, I had to stay in the island.

Q: Was your family with you in the island?

A: Yes. I was at Harris Memorial Church when a request came from Lahaina Church and also from Bishop. So, Harris Memorial Church finally decided that they would lend Rev. Kono there until the slump problem was solved in the island. That's why the whole family went over there. We first thought it might take actually six months before everything would smooth down. But fortunately, it took us only about three months. We were almost ready to get back and then all of sudden...Bomb! That's why people in Lahaina were so grateful for my presence there.

Q: So, you stayed there till the end of the war?

A: Yes, till the end of the war. I finally came home in 1947.



Of course, I was thinking whether to go back to Japan or back to the mainland. That was my problem. In 1947, I came back.

Q: To the mainland?

A: Yes. Because the problem of education of our children had to be considered.

Q: How old were they?

A: The oldest daughter had just finished grammar school, and she had to prepare for high school. Of course, we had good high schools over there, too. But after all, Hawaii is a narrow place. In order to give a broader education, I thought, should we go back to Japan or to the mainland. My wife didn't want to go to Japan. So, I had to sacrifice my own desire. Well, children were all happy about that.

Q: You came back to Seattle, didn't you?

A: No, we came back to California. I was then appointed to Riverside Union Church, and we stayed there until 1954. Then, I was appointed to Seattle Japanese Methodist Church in 1954. Ever since then I stayed here. It was 20 years ago.

Q: Are you still working full-time?

A: No, I'm retired now. I retired in 1970. I also published my book in 1970.



Q: What was it about?

A: That was more or less about my life story and my traveling accounts, and also my theological view.

Q: How many books have you published?

A: Just one book. Of course, I edited and helped to publish our church's sixtieth Anniversary book.

Q: When you came back to the mainland in 1947, how was the situation?

A: Oh, the housing situation was terrible during that time. See, that was why I came a month ahead leaving the rest of my family behind to try to find some place to live. I took one year leave-of-absence that year. Oh, but in San Francisco, Los Angeles, or wherever, there was no place to live. A friend of mine in Los Angeles offered me a place, and said, "I will disoccupy my home and let you live there." But I said, "Oh, no, no. I don't want..." So I refused that. Then, I finally decided to buy a used car and take my family as soon as they arrived in San Francisco. They had to stay somewhere including four children, we had six in our family altogether. Even at hotels during that time you couldn't get two rooms, case like that. Oh, the housing situation was terrible. I decided to buy a second-hand car and take the whole family moving, and then wherever we could find a home, a house, we would stop there. That was my idea. So, when they returned I started out traveling. Before I went out, I asked the government housing



in Richmond. I asked them to let me know if they would have any vacancy. But they first didn't allow us to use any house unless I had connection with the army, or the military. It was only for the military personnel. I am a minister, you see, so I asked them for a special consideration, because I was having a really difficult time in finding a place to live. So, I left my note and then went out. In West Los Angeles, there was no housing, in Los Angeles, no housing. So we went to Riverside, there again no house available. From Riverside we went to Arizona, no house there, either. Then to Salt Lake City, no house, went to Denver, oh, no house, you see. In Denver we couldn't even stay in one hotel, because there was no one room for six people. In Denver, and in Salt Lake City, the situation was very keen.

Finally we went to Chicago through Omaha. The same situation in Chicago. I really had a hard time. When we got to Chicago I got a letter from one of my minister friends in California. It said that his wife had a surgery, a very serious one. So, he wrote a letter to me, "Can you come by to California and help me for a little while?", I thought I must help him somehow. Instead of going to Washington or to New York, we stopped right there and came back. When we came back to Richmond, there I got a news that the Government house, just one room, was open since about a week



ago then. I wasn't sure if that was still available or not, but the message said if I went there right then, it might be possible. Right after i came back, the next day, I went to Richmond and I finally negotiated to get a Richmond government house. That's the way. For full one month we had been traveling to get a government house. It was after all a good thing that I returned from Chicago. Otherwise I had to, maybe, live somewhere else. Of course, if I had gone to the country it might have been different. That was why during that time you would become a rich man, at least you could make a lot of money if you had any apartments or a hotel. The housing situation was really terrible.

Q: Was there any case of some discrimination or violence after you came back?

A: Oh, yes. I heard about quite a bit of discrimination especially in regards to housing. At the time in Los Angeles you couldn't always live where you wanted. Let's say, you went to a particular section of town, and you got a house there, and tried to move in. Then a lot of people would come and say, "No, no, no. No Japanese in this section." Such feeling was still prevalent, because this was a remnant from the old anti-Japanese feeling, not a new, special one. The climate was like this through the war, too. Many people suffered because of Japanese army's



presence in Manila and elsewhere, especially those who lost their son in the war. So, the anti-Japanese feeling was quite strong at the time. It was more or less a natural reaction, and we cannot blame them. It took us for a while to overcome this, though. The fact is Americans did not know what Japanese were nor what the Japan's true intension in the war was. It was over publicized that Japan was trying to control the entire Asia. But the fact was that Japan did not have that idea at all. Instead, what Japan hoped to do was to establish a cooperation, an Asiatic Cooperation (see note) with Japan. But since they rejected that idea, the military had to go up there; "If you don't cooperate well, can't help it, we got to do something about it." That's why the military power pushed, and pushed, and pushed.

I had a very interesting time once in Berkeley. There, oh about thirty to forty students from the University of California--all Caucasion students--got together and they asked my opinions about Japanese sentiment towards American people. This was right after I returned from Hawaii in 1947. Well, a half of them were Christians and the rest of them were non-Christians. At that time--this is after the war--Americans were sending so many good things to Japan in order to help. So I told them, "If you think that helping Japan in a materialistic way, and if you are satisfied with that, then you will never understand Japanese



people. If you think that the material aid is an extension of you love, it is your love, but..." I told them, "it is the most incomplete loving sentiment. What you really need is the understanding of the Japanese mind. Why Japan and America started fighting? Because you failed to recognize Japanese spirit. Unless we begin to understand one another the true Japanese and the true American spirit, there will be no friendship in the future. So, what I really want you to do from now on is to try and study the Japanese mind. If we don't, someday something will happen again. That's both to you and to myself. One of the true duties for us in establishing the future peace between America and Japan is to devote ourselves to understanding one another spiritually. If we ever fail that, then, someday something will happen." That's what I told them. During that time segregation and anti-Japanese feeling still existed very much.

Q: Have you had any experience of being subjected to any kind of violence?

A: No, no. So far as I know, I have never had such experiences to myself.

Q: Then, what you are talking about is something like insulting and humiliating experiences, and things like that?

A: Yes, kind of insults to the freedom to...more or less, the



freedom to life, also especially in relation to the housing situation during that time. Those things, however, gradually (disappeared) when they began to know about the contribution of the 442, things began to change. In the beginning they couldn't understand why Japan and the US fought against each other, and some of them really couldn't understand why those Japanese were so loyal to America. Well, some of them said that since we never had things like that in our human history, it was hard to understand. Maybe so. In a way we can not understand it from the common-sense point of view, or from the logical point of view. They began to understand it, you see, when I talked about the Japanese idea of giri. You know, it is even working in the minds of American born Japanese, the Nisei. It could be an unconscious thing to them. Two, three years ago I gave a lecture at Whittworth college in Spokane, a special lecture to Japanese audience. I told them, "As long as you don't understand what the word giri means, you still cannot understand Japanese mind. So, I want you to try to understand what giri means. That has a deeper connection to the sense of loyalty." Well, some of this American born Japanese do not have the giri spirit as the Issei's do. Yet, others carry that on unconsciously, when we point out for them some special insights and ideas they have.

Q: Now, about the Sansei generation. What do you think of them?



A: I maintain a relatively optimistic opinion about the Sansei, although not necessarily so on everything about them. Talking from the ethnic consciousness point of view, the Nisei's were brought up under such an anti-japanese pressure, and for that reason they are somewhat automatically apt to become reserved in terms of ethnic matters. Whereas, it is less apparent among the Sansei. Another thing is that the Sansei learn very little from their own parents with regards to such things as their race, Japanese culture, Japan, what it means to be a Japanese and others. The Sansei do want to know more about themselves very much, yet their parents can not be of much help to them in this field, you see. Almost automatically, therefore, they think that they have to do it by themselves, directly. That is, under these circumstances, probably one of the reasons, directly or indirectly, why the Sansei are so interested in the Issei Generation. Comparatively speaking, the Sansei are searching for the identity that they are Japanese, and they want to know more about Japanese people.

That's how I see them as far as in Seattle. They are interested, in a sense more than we think they are, in Japan and the Japanese. Now we have dancers and singers and others coming from the Sansei generation, which does not necessarily mean that they understand it all, but at least they have interests in those things. They now have more interests in such things than the Nisei used to have.



That's why I believe that there is a sort of spirit naturally mean that they understand it all, but at least they have interests in those things. They now have more interests in such things than the Nisei used to have. That's why I believe that there is a sort of spirit naturally being fermented among them as to taking it seriously to make contributions as one of the ethnic groups in this country. On one hand I can point out their bad aspect; they haven't experienced any of the hardships as we have. This makes really a big difference between us. But on the other hand, when it comes to the ethnic movements I believe they have a lot more solid thinking about them, in fact better than we thought they would. Well, this doesn't necessarily apply to every single Sansei, though, not quite.

Q: I see them the same way you do about the active people among them.

A: And also, the ones in that category tend to be very receptive you know. How is it in California, generally speaking?

Q: I would say the same as it is up here as you just described.

A: Oh, yah? The same way.

Q: For example, some young people of our church go ahead and decorate their rooms with a big Rising Sun Flag, and everything. And, patching Japanese Navy Flags on their shirt



sleeves and on their pants. It seems to me that it is essentially to realize "I am a Japanese American" not necessarily to emphasize Japan per se. Do you agree, or do you not, that it is very important to be self-conscious about being a Japanese?

A: Yes, that's right. The other day I wrote a long article for a newspaper. In it I was more or less discussing what we are talking about now. Our ethnic consciousness is one thing we can not wipe off, even if we try to cast away, no matter what you are, Blacks or Japanese or Whatever. If we fail to neutralize our racial consciousness in our cultural life, then it becomes very hard and nearly impossible to do anything, you see. And if you have to pursue any cultural movements under those nearly-impossible situations, when in the end they will only produce something abnormal. To have ethnic consciousness is only a human nature, you cannot do anything about it. But yet, how we can live together with other races of people in harmony is another question, a big question as a matter of fact. When such a time comes as each ethnic group living with its own ethnic consciousness in mind, and also trying to understand other races--every ethnic group trying to understand another, say, between Japanese and the blacks, between the Blacks and the white, the whites and Japanese, and so on--once we can create the spirit of understanding each other among different ethnic groups, then we can expect a truly harmonized world. When sort of antagonism comes out more and



more, there's going to be a problem there. When Japanese hate to be Japanese, or try not to talk about it, then that's an abnormal ethnic consciousness, I have to say. Soon it will give birth to something very strange in such a case. I sincerely would like the Japanese in Japan to think about those things. It appears to me that people around Los Angeles these days have a tendency to put a little bit too much emphasis on distinctive Japanese features. Once again I heard about a similar story, only yesterday, from a visitor coming up from Los Angeles. If Japanese people insist on pushing forward what is good only for Japanese, then other ethnic groups will step back unwillingly. There is no truly harmonized life in there.

Even worse, you have to face the uprising antagonism in such a case. If Japan with assuming the leadership role in Asia, keeps on going with no regards to the question of ethnic coordination, or how various races can successfully live in harmony, then, it inevitably becomes impossible for the Asians to build the true sense of unity. It is my sincere hope that especially the Japanese in Japan will do some thinking on these things.

Q: Having too much power causes overdoing things?

A: That's right.



Q: As a Issei yourself what do you expect young people to learn in terms of culture, heritages, and things of that sort?

A: What I would like to tell them, especially to Japanese in America, is this. In what way we can contribute as Japanese not only to America but to the world at large--although we live in America, the people's world is no way limited only to America, you know--how we should live our life for the good of the whole world. I hope to see them live with that kind of sttitude. Well, the question of religion would naturally come in there, too. Japanese in the US should have a broader viewpoint. The number of ethnic goups in the US is far leading more than in any one country (see note). That's the way I see it.

Q: In your opinion what are the traits and characteristics of Issei?

A: It would be patience and the hard working spirit. After all it's the patience and their hard work. Without that spirit, we must have given in somewhere half way.

Q: Honestly, the Issei people really didn't stop halfway.

A: That's because they came patiently and silently even at the time when they were rejected and kicked around. It might be both good and bad aspects of them at the same time. If citizenship is not granted to you--it can be said not just about Japanese but about other racial groups, too--and you are not allowed to obtain one, however strongly



you persist in your own rights, people just won't listen to you in many cases, for you don't have the citizenship. "Sorry, but you don't have the citizenship," they would say. If you demand in such cases the equal rights as the citizenship holders do, they would tell you it's you that are wrong. Thus, Issei had to undergo the difficulties with kind of immigrant mentality--"we, who are not granted citizenship are immigrants here." Rather than standing up for the human rights and freedom on the equal basis as human kinds, they gave into a kind of resignation, a psychological one, saying, "...after all we are Japanese living in America." In the days of Americanization Movement and of staging up counter moves against the exclusion movement, Christians often used to say, "Don't we all belong to one and the same kind; the Human Kind?"

We tried to call attention of American Christians, we tried to urge them on the equal basis as human being to reconsider the situation. We did things of that sort in this area. In old times, for example, when Paul had to confront the establishment authorities in Rome, he always emphasized his position of being a Roman citizen, for he had a Roman citizenship. He could do that because he had his rights as a citizen. I believe he would not have said what he said if he had not had Roman citizenship.



Q: Were there anyone among Japanese who started riots and things like that?

A: Well, I know of very few cases.

Q: Have you met people who started labor unions?

A: Very few instances over here, but while in Hawaii, yes. Among those who started the unions over there, something like twelve to thirteen people were once thrown into jail. This was in Hawaii, a long, long time ago. Over here I seldom heard anything like that.

Q: Weren't there any incidents where Japanese had shot or beaten up whites, or something like that?

A: Very little I hear about such things over here. There were some fights and things like that at railroad construction sites, or maybe at sawmills and other places like that. But those were just personal disputes...

Q: How about the fights between or among Japanese?

A: Yes, there were some. It might have been one of the reasons why we couldn't develop Japanese communities more and bigger. We were less cooperative than Chinese people, I think.

Q" It is my observation in California that when both business partners are Japanese, they just can't make it. Whereas, if it was between Chinese or between a Chinese and a Japanese



it works well. What do you think of it?

A: Well, I think it is probably because either side becomes more likely to compromise when their races are different. If it is between two Japanese, either one will think of compromising, instead one side will try to stick to his side of the story. For this reason, I think, it becomes hard to build up a true partnership between Japanese.

Q: We, Japanese people do have a sense of enryo, but when it comes to business, probably that amounts to nothing, would that be the case?

A: Probably that is so in a business world. We tend to protect those whom we owe something to, and I think your point is certainly valid. Another thing about Japanese is that the way we express ourselves in private is quite often different from the one in public. In private we are very nice, and yet in public we have a bad habit of grumbling about this and that, you know, about really trivial matters.

In a sense the same thing goes to the moral life of Japanese in Japan. On individual basis, or family-wise, Japanese are very polite and courteous people, yet once they are in public, they will have no scruple to do incredible things that you and I may not be able to believe that's the same people. The best example can be found when you take a train ride in Japan. It seems to me they are less concerned about doing things together with other people than the



people of other races are.

Q: How were the Issei, when they were young, going about their moral life?

A: Well, when they were still young, a majority of the Issei were living by the ethical and moral codes of Confucious and Mencius. Therefore, they are the people who placed in the center of their life such value as filial duty, or so-called filial-piety. So, they made it the first priority to follow the parents' directions as much as possible. They have a strong tendency to take into consideration the opinions of their elders more seriously. Therefore, when we talk of their idea of moralism, or the concept of their ethics, a lot of it is something that they were taught by the people outside, so to speak, and something that was imposed upon them from outside. Whereas, the Christian morality is, as you know... You see, Christians follow their faith, and do things according to their conscience without being told by the others to do this and that.

They do things just naturally what their faith tells them. The kind of ethics that Japanese people uphold, however, is surrounded by such circumstantial thoughts as how it may appear in the eyes of the ancestors, and before the public, and before the society that they live in, and things like that. These things lie in the center of their judgement.



So, the Issei world was dominated by the kind of a strange obligation mentality that tells them to do things in a certain way because others do that way, whether or not they agree to it. Often times what an Issei says becomes inconsistent; he may say one thing today, and tomorrow just another thing. These are because they are submissive to other people's mood. Christians should not be that way, I believe. The Nisei are in this respect pretty clear and straight. They make up their mind based on their own conscience.

Q: That's right. Nisei are that way.

A: Yes, they became that way. Some of the things that Issei do often become very hard for them to agree with or to understand at all.

Q: Around the Meiji Era in Japan it was not considered as awfully sinful thing for young people to do gamblings or involved with prostitutes (see note).

A: It's not really true, though. However, as we say in Japanese it was more of a shikataganai, you-can't-help-it kind of a thing, you know.

Q: You mean it was shikataganai for Issei because there weren't enough women around over here at the time?

A: Yes, that's right. It was black and white clear to them that gambling and other things like that were bad things



to do. Even so, it was again a matter of shikataganai. Saying "this is shikataganai, and so is that," is not quite acceptable in some cases. Well, therefore, people start to learn how to stay away from those things. As you know well, there were people called kyokaku, or Japanese gangsters, during the Tokugawa Era. Gambling was the main business of their world. Gamblers maintained their own moralities, which they lived by.

Q: People like Morino-Ishimatsu?

A: That's right. Peculiar things of the past. That sort of thing is not, basically speaking, a permissible thing to any society, whether it was in the past or present day. What is bad is bad, what is good is good, you have to be clear about it.

Q: How were the Issei in general? When they got here many of them were seventeen and eighteen years old, weren't they? Especially around 1910 till 1915 there were a lot of young people everywhere. Isn't that right?

A: Yes, that's right. Most of those people who came over here were very young, well, some old ones were with them, too. When I say old ones, that's actually the ones in their middle age, you see. A fifty year old was considered at that time very, very old.



Q: Some people say Issei were pretty bad--probably in relation to gambling and prostitution--but, in general how were they actually? Were the young people in those days serious kind of people, you know, behaving well and living a square life? Or, many of them were sort of loose as some people say?

A: Let's see...generally speaking, I think Japanese were in a sense a model type of the people, very fine and serious people as the Westerners say about us. Talking about the bad ones, well, I think they were in reality just one or two people out of ten, truly small in number, you see. This small number of people, however small they were in number, can mislead a lot of other people, and they can hurt the majority of Japanese in many ways. And that's what happened once in a while. So, we just had to keep our eyes on those people constantly. It was not that the whole Issei community concured with them, or anything. At any rate they were just very special kind of people, like one out of ten. Yet, the danger always existed that some people might be influenced by them.

Those who wanted to go back to Japan very soon might have been tempted to gambling as one of the means to make a quick money. In fact there were some people like that. Precisely because of that kind of temptation and danger the Christian churches committed themselves to lead those people to a more proper and right life. It was the biggest message as well as the mission at that time of the churches. We didn't think it wise to leave them all alone.



Q: Christian mission at the time was, like you just said, very clear to many people, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was. Very much so.

Q: Everybody was aware of it.

A: That is true.

Q: And it was a strong advantage to the church.

A: YES.

Q: It is getting to be very hard these days to define a mission of the church.

A: That's right, yes. I know.

Q: Everyone grew as gentlemen, the Nisei, you know?

A: And here's another thing. A majority of Christians are converted Buddhists, you see. If the Buddhism can guarantee the salvation within its theology, then, the situation would have been a bit different from it is now. The Buddhism does not quite talk about the salvation, not as much as Christianity does, anyway. The Shin-shu sect these days may teach that you will be saved if you pray and chant "Namuami dabutsu" (see note). While, if you really go into Buddhist theologies, you will find it is not quite the answer to the salvation. Here I can say, the more you study Buddhism, the more you will be puzzled. On the contrary, the more you study Buddhism, the more you



will be puzzled. On the contrary, the more you study Christianity, the clearer you will be. The deeper you go into Christianity, the more you understand it, and the deeper you go into Buddhism, the less you understand. What it says here is that the fact that you will understand less and less means something is fundamentally wrong with Buddhism. When people comprehend this, Christianity becomes the only alternative. Therefore, the Issei Christians in old days used to say out of their conviction that the Christians faith is the answer to them. Whereas hardly anyone says such thing nowadays, not even the white Americans. Liberal view towards Christianity is getting so popular.

Q: The Issei often used to drink a lot, many of them. And more often than not they would up with having a noisy spree here and there, which is not quite a common thing to other Americans. They do drink, and some of them drink quite a lot, but yet they seldom go wild.

A: Well, those who lived drinking would go wild once in a while.

Q: Didn't such thing cause any problem?

A: Well, yes, every now and then. So, I used to say that so long as they followed the Christian principles, they wouldn't have to put themselves to shame before the white people. In fact, there was a voice of, along this similar line, advising them to refrain from drinking too much.



I used to hear people say that the Christians don't drink. It's not exactly the same these days. Yet, I still here that kind of remark pretty often among Japanese even now. However, in the days of the Issei, let's say, up until fifteen to sixteen years ago, a lot of people among Buddhists took it for a fact that those who did not drink were all Christians. Nowadays they know that some Christians do drink and so, they say such a thing less often now. Just recently I was asked by a man, "Why don't Christians drink? Is it a rule from the beginning?" So I answered it was not so, that we are not condemning the habit of drinking. I think it was probably because of and around the time of the prohibition movement that a Christian or the Christianity itself was associated with the conception of drinking abstinence. You see, a lot of women's groups took the initiative in the prohibition movement, made it widespread all over the country, and finally made it into a law.

So I said the movement that discourages drinking did not primarily come from Christianity, but rather from the previous prohibition movement that swept the country. Some say that Christians should not drink. But I don't think Jesus himself said such a thing, well, some people might even say he did. It is not as big a principle or anything like that as some non-Christians may think it is. In Palestine, as you know, they produce a lot of wine, and they drink wine for water. So I told the man that it was



rooted more in the American social movements than to say it came from the Christian doctrine itself. He understood me at last.

Q: Please tell us more about the Americanization movement. Was drinking one of the issues there?

A: It was one of them, yes, just to go along with the general social climate of the time of the Prohibition. Also we emphasized on appreciation of the American life. For example, people in this country used to take day-off on Sundays without fail, it may not be as strongly a customary thing now as it was before, though. It has been their custom not to work on Sundays. Instead they went to church on Sunday.

We thought, therefore, that we should do as they do, such as going to church on Sunday, by adopting their custom. Or, when the Prohibition movement came about strongly, we restrained ourselves from drinking. In short we tried as much as possible to live as Americans live. Occasionally I would find some people saying that they did not care about their housing condition nor about the way they would live as long as they were able to live their daily life. To those people I told that it was wrong, that they should think twice before saying such things, and that they should take good care of their children and the family.

Also " used to tell them to think what American spirit of freedom is all about in this sense. You know, "No money spells no freedom" kind of thinking that some Japanese



may have is wrong. American concept of freedom derives for the most part from the Christian understanding of freedom. We all have to respect the kind of free-life in spiritual sense of the term. It's against the American spirit for any parents to bring up their children with no regards to the children's own will. The Americanization movement was concerned, basically from such an angle as this one, how to adopt good aspects of the American life to our own and to the education of our children.

Q: Are there any other points that the movement emphasized particularly?

A: Well, for instance--this is not to say we emphasized this next point particularly, but just to give you an example--you know, Japanese women in the past used to work in the field with their small child on the back. Though nobody these days will say anything against it, it was thought at that time that Americans might be averse to such a thing. There can be actually two ways to interpret this habit of carrying a baby on the back while working. One is that Japanese people work with the baby on their back, therefore, they don't mind giving their children less freedom. The second interpretation goes, contrary to the first one, they take really good care of their children. The kind of message we got at the time was that the Americans did not see it as we saw it, you know the latter. The social climate of the time was such that they would tell us, "Do you guys



really have to make money even by doing such a thing to that extent? If that is how the Japanese are, then we don't want any Japanese here." In the movement we dealt with each of those problems--working on Sundays, working with the baby on the back, and others--as a concrete problem to be solved.

Q: Are there any other examples?

A: Well, another one would be the case of working woman. Nowadays a lot of women in this country go out and work, but not in those days, you see. So, some people would say, "Japanese are no good. They make their women work." White women used to pick up on these things against us. It may be useless to talk about it now, because it is a matter of the difference of the time. Once I have talked to a group of white people, "If you had been doing years ago what you are doing now--working as women--then, we Japanese wouldn't have to be subjected to the exclusion atmosphere in the past!" The time has changed. The change of the time has been cruel to us. Another example is with the store business problems. Along the same line, we were always accused of working for too long a time. White people used to say that they could not compete with Japanese counterparts, for they worked for 8 hours while we worked for 10 hours, sometimes up to 15 hours. When we worked hard knowing that the life is such a precious thing, then they would slander us, "Money is all what they are concerned about. They work hard just to make more and more money."



Unrestricted working hour had caused one of the biggest commotions among the business people and others.

Q: Many Japanese were laborers and a general working people. Didn't they draw some bad remarks...such as for wearing dirty clothing?

A: Yes, there were some occasions like that. On that particular point, we were told to wear some Sunday clothes on Sundays as we were supposed to. Nobody said anything bad about working with dirty pants on so long as it was a weekday. But not on Sunday. So, some of us had an idea that we must have at least one pair of street wear of some sort. But in fact, it is only a secondary, minor question.

Q: Is that why a lot of them went out to town on weekends with their best clothes and best tie on whenever they did?

A: Yes, that's right. It wasn't that hard for us Japanese to adopt this custom. We are, relatively speaking, like that to begin with. I think it is a good thing. But in the long run what we put on is not the ultimate question we should be concerned with. Everybody should feel confident and comfortable in his own thinking habits, you know.

Q: What was the most difficult thing for Japanese in terms of Americanization? Were there anything that Japanese people could not quite make it in trying to do things like Americans do?



A: Yes, there were a lot of such cases. That's because on one hand, it is too much of America-infected (see note) attitudes from Japanese point of view. And yet, on the other hand, you had to face the reality of exclusion. Therefore, it is only natural for us to say, "We know our own way, and can do it, just as long as they don't make any commotion of exclusion out of us." It was very likely in such circumstances to arise a conflict with Buddhist people. An allegation that Christians had to cope with was such that some were able to cooperate with Americans because they were Christians. Whereas, Buddhists could not do the same. So, the allegation in the end was that we were taking advantage of Americanization movement so as to strengthen our Christian evangelism. Especially a society of Japanese gamblers was, after all, the front runner of criticizing Americans and their exclusionist attitude. But yet, those gamblers did not think of bettering themselves somehow. Maybe, this type of people are the same way wherever they are. One of the aims of the Americanization movement by Japanese was to help American society understand such society of ours so that both of us could be instrumental in fighting against the exclusion movement, for instance. And the church was expected to carry out that mission in behalf of the Japanese community. After all, we had to appeal to the American churches through the Americanization movement at the same time.



Q: Tell us something about the Pacific Japanese Provisional Conference. First, when was it formed?

A: The Provisional Conference was, I believe, founded after the war. Before, it was called the Pacific Japanese Mission, and the difference between the two was that the Mission had no authority. Things were discussed and resolved on the Mission level. Then, the Mission had to report what it decided upon over to the Nevada Conference--the Mission belonged to the California-Nevada Conference--and there their decisions were officialized. While, as for the Provisional Conference, what we decided on was automatically recognized as the official decisions without going to further bodies. What we decided there was the final decision. It was very much independent in that sense.

Q: What was the reason do you think that the Provisional Conference was granted that much power?

A: It was based on the number of member churches. We had over two hundred churches, and the fact is the Provisional Conference had thirty three churches as affiliated members. Beside our organization, there was another one called the Oriental Provisional Conference, which was composed of Chinses, Korean, and Filipino membership. They had to put three different races together to make up the Oriental Conference, otherwise the total number of member churches would fall short. In any case they had problems among themselves, and didn't last long, and eventually they resolved their organization.



Q: What kind of understanding towards Japanese do you think the American churches had that granted such power to Japanese after the war? Was that because they did not want to take care of Japanese any longer, or because they understood Japanese and decided that Japanese thereafter could stand on their own feet?

A: Just a minute. The Provisional Conference was founded before the war... or was it after the war? I don't remember exactly when it was started. At any rate, the beginning of it was that the Conference of Japanese churches was thought at the time to be able to sail out to the sea by itself as a conference, in other words it was started after we were believed to have met the qualification to be on our own; the qualification being, as I said earlier, the number of the member churches.

Q: And you petitioned for it?

A: That's right.

Q: Thank you very much, Rev. Kono, for your patience and co-operation.